

## LEGENDS

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tance the Malaltzincas were granted a large area between Tacámbaro and Huetamo. The word Huetamo itself is Matlaltzinca, and there is still a "Pirinda" barrio (ward) in the town (Osborne, 1943, p. 61).

Clearly discernible are elements of Spanish Catholic acculturation in the dream portion of the legend. Also evident is the philosophical rationalization of a conquered people who had to accept and adjust to alien rule for an indefinite time into the future.

## The Legend

The first morning rays illuminated the sky over Tingambato. It was the month of *duari* in the year of *ocelotl*. Three small cloudlets had just finished bathing the corpulent *ocote* trees and the sighing pines with a light rainfall.

The yellow-like dust of this land was unfertile, whereas in days long past it had been the site of great forests and immense meadows covered with exuberant vegetation, wild and fruitful. Formerly the jaguar had stalked here among the undergrowth; the timid *cú* bird had rendered his monotonously doleful notes; and, above all, the hummingbird (Tzintzún), the divine bird of the Tarascans, had sung his gorgeous melodies as if in offering to the god Curicaueri.

The day was fresh and all of nature was awakening. Over in the distance, mountain tops were running in and out of the shadows, just as in a dream of long ago hope had run its path of illusions. Camachuén was dreaming of those faraway things of the spirit, of those faraway things of love, where love was losing to hopelessness.

Camachuén (the protected of the gods), king of Tingambato, was thoughtfully walking in his garden which was filled with trees and flowers. There had been no calamity concerning his people which could be bothering him, nor was he concerned with Irichacuara, king of Pátzcuaro, with whom he had fought in times past. Furthermore, both King Characu, king of the Matlatzincas

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